

the large number of sambar and pig that used to abound, but I have no doubt that they killed the odd tahr too.

The company for whom I worked opened up the Tea Estates on the High Wavys and I know this area well. There are still a few tahr there but the herds are very small. Like some of the tahr in the Anamallais they travel considerable distances through dense and heavy forest from grass patch to grass patch. There is a huge area of unopened virgin forest here right down to the Periyar Game Reserve, and it is quite likely that a survey would discover that there were still small herds of ibex throughout the area.

I have not been in the Nelliampathi hills since 1942. Then there were a fair number of tahr there in the Contengady Estate area. But there has been a lot of development in this district since then, and all game may well have been driven out.

I was very interested to read that small herds still survive further south in the more isolated areas of forest. I think it is very probable that a search in areas I have described above might reveal other herds in isolated areas of which there are many suitable ones.

The Nilgiri Tahr is an adaptable animal, and might quite possibly adapt itself to a safer way of living than the great herds of the Anamallais and the High Range which used to live almost entirely in open grass land. The smallness of the bands that lived in the more isolated areas was probably due to the fact that they had to wander considerable distances to find suitable grazing. I have seen tahr nibble at browse. I do not think that they browse habitually where grazing is plentiful, but is possible that they might become habitual browsers if good grazing areas were restricted.

BOYNARDS MANOR HOUSE,
RUDGWICK,
HARSHAM RH2 3AD,
SUSSEX, ENGLAND,
July 24, 1971.

JAMES L. H. WILLIAMS

7. AN ALBINISTIC GADWALL FROM INDIA

(With two plates)

Through the kindness of Mr. J. C. Daniel of the Bombay Natural History Society we have been invited to examine and comment on an albinistic example of the Gadwall, *Anas strepera* Linnaeus. This bird was collected on November 25th, 1967, at Bharatpur, Rajasthan, India; Museum No. 127-68 and is a female.

Description :

Upperparts: these are generally off white with a yellowish tinge; the rump, however, is pale sooty-brown with upper tail coverts of the same colour, but much paler.

Underparts: from root of neck to lower edge of breast shield off white, but whiter than upperparts, with typical distribution of the palest Gadwall spotting on the breast shield and down both flanks. Belly and under tail coverts white, with very faint spotting on lower belly and under tail coverts.

Wings: above as upperparts, below whiter. Greater wing coverts on both sides, dark sooty-brown, while the longest secondaries are a purer white. Rectrices off white. Head and neck whitish with full distribution of Gadwall marking, but much diluted. Irides brown, bill and legs brownish-yellow. The bill shows the typical strong lamellae of the Gadwall.

Measurements in mm.

Wing (chord)	.. 263
Bill length (from feather margin)	.. 40
Bill width (at nostrils)	.. 17
Tarsus	.. 40

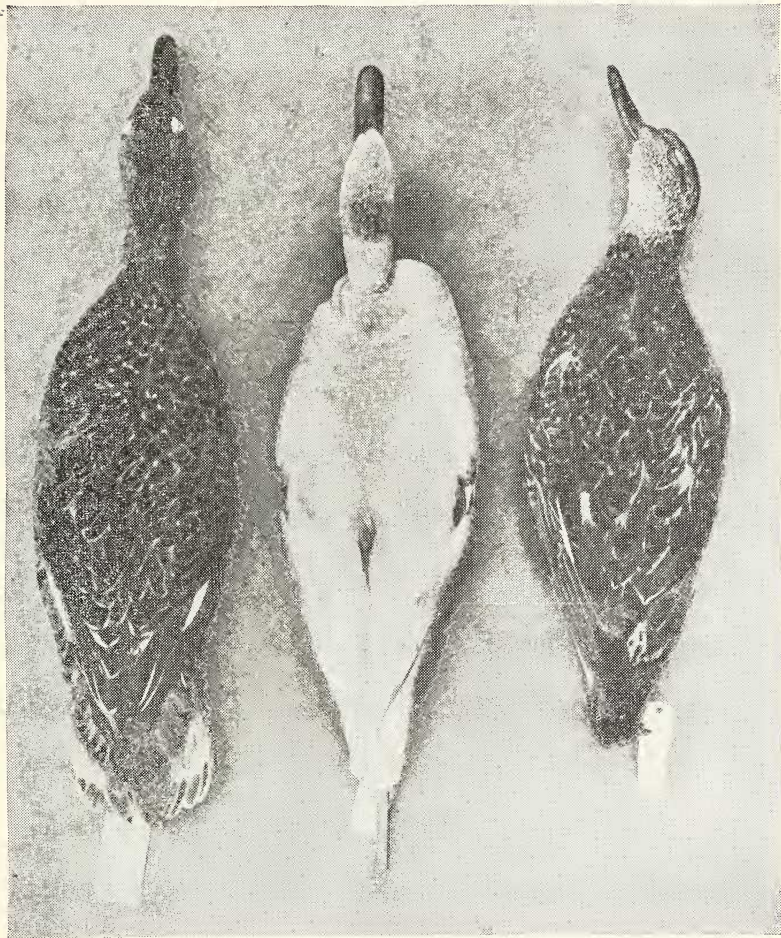
Discussion: the specimen appears to be a bird of the year judging by the narrow pointed tail feathers and the elongated and more pointed wing coverts. Like all albinistic individuals this specimen shows excessive wear of its plumage generally, but particularly of the flight feathers.

Albinistic Gadwall appear rare. There are two types of female normal winter plumage—a white-breasted and a spotted type, the former being the more usual. From the standard works, the dark spotted type does not appear to have been described. However, the specimen now described is best classified as showing a normally distributed 'ghost' pattern, and the bird is therefore an example of marked hypochromatism, in which all the pigments are present, but in much reduced amount, thus conforming in its characters to chlorochroism (Rensch 1925)¹.

Sage (*in litt.* 1971) informs us that the only record of albinism in the Gadwall known to him was an immature which was entirely pale creamy-fawn, with many slightly darker frecklings on the body and wings, trapped at Ministi Lake, near Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, on

¹ RENSCH, B. (1925) : Die Farb aberrationen der Vögel. *J.f.o.* 73(4) : 514-539

Harrison : *Gadwall*



Upperparts

The albinistic *Gadwall* from India
between the two types of female.